U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Little Snake Field Office
455 Emerson Street
Craig, CO 81625-1129

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA NUMBER: CO-100-2006-017EA

PERMIT/ALLOTMENT NUMBER: 0501844 / 04096

PROJECT NAME: Transfer and issuance of a new grazing lease on the Dry Fork Allotment #04096 from Warrick Pastures (via Colorado State Land Board) to Nottingham Land & Livestock.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: See Allotment Maps (Attachment 1)
T.8N R.88W portions of Sections 34
T.7N R.88W part of Section 2
2,633 acres State
199 acres BLM
2,832 acres Total

APPLICANT: Nottingham Land & Livestock

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to the following plan:

Name of Plans: Little Snake Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision

Date(s) Approved: April 26, 1989

Other Documents:

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, as amended (43 USC 1752).

Rangeland Reform Final Environmental Impact Statement. December, 1994.

Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing in Colorado. Date Approved: February 12, 1997.

Results: The proposed action is consistent with the Little Snake Resource Management Plan, Record of Decision, Livestock Grazing Management objective to improve range conditions for both wildlife and livestock through proper utilization of key forage plants and adjusting livestock stocking rates as a result of vegetation studies.

The proposed action is located within Management Unit 1 (Eastern Yampa River). The proposed action is compatible with the management objectives for this unit, which is to provide for the development of the coal, oil and gas resources.

The proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with this plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3).

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION: BLM lease #0501290, which authorizes livestock grazing on the Dry Fork Allotment #04096 expired on February 28, 2004. The lessee sold the base property to a non-qualified applicant so the lease was not renewed at that time. This lease is subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior, who delegated the authority to BLM, for a period of up to ten years. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has the authority to renew the livestock grazing leases consistent with the provisions of the *Taylor Grazing Act, Public Rangelands Improvement Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act,* and Little Snake Field Office's *Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.* This Plan/EIS has been amended by *Standards for Public Land Health in the State of Colorado.*

The following Environmental Assessment (CO-100-2006-017EA) will analyze the impacts of livestock grazing on public land managed by the BLM. The analysis will recommend terms and conditions to the lease to improve or maintain public land health. The Proposed Action will be assessed for meeting land health standards.

In order to graze livestock on public land, the livestock producer (lessee) must hold a grazing lease. The grazing lessee has a preference right to receive the lease if grazing is to continue. The land use plan allows grazing to continue. This EA will be a site specific look to determine if grazing should continue as provided for in the land use plan and to identify the conditions under which it can be renewed.

BACKGROUND: Warrick Pastures (#0501290) had the preference on the Dry Fork Allotment #04096 from 1954 until 2001. In 2001 the base property was sold to the Colorado State Land Board (SLB). The SLB is not a qualified applicant and is therefore not allowed to hold a BLM grazing lease. The base property was leased to Nottingham Land & Livestock in 2005 for a term of 10 years, expiring February 28, 2015.

In the RMP, the allotment was authorized for cattle from 5/1to10/31 for a total of 42 AUMs. In 1981 the annual application shows a request to use the allotment only for 30 days in the fall, as agreed upon "for conservation and protection of the range". In 1986 Warrick Pastures was billed for use by sheep. On the 1988 annual application Warrick requested that Sharon Winslow's name be put on the lease, and the annual application shows sheep use from 9/7 to 10/6. No transfer was completed. In April 1994 a new ten year lease was printed showing use by cattle, same dates as the prior lease, 5/1to10/31. "Cattle" is crossed out and "sheep" is written over. In June of the same year, another lease is printed, this one for sheep use with season of use 9/7 to 10/6. No NEPA analysis was completed on the change in type of livestock or season of use.

The last paid bill by Sharon Winslow was 2001, when the base property was sold to the SLB.

Mr. Nottingham is applying for 42 AUMs of sheep use from May 1 to October 31.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would approve the transfer and issue a new grazing lease to Nottingham Land & Livestock. This would be for a period of nine years ending 2015, the same date as the current base property lease from the State Land Board.

Since no NEPA analysis was done on the conversion in 1994 from cattle to sheep, this EA will analyze that change.

The new lease would be transferred and issued as follows:

From: Warrick Pastures (#0501290)

Allotment Name & #	Livestock Number & Kind	Dates Begin End	%PL	AUMs
Dry Fork #04096	7 Cattle	05/01 - 10/31	100	42

To: Mike Nottingham (0501844)

Allotment Name & #	Livestock Number & Kind	Dates Begin End	%PL	AUMs
Dry Fork #04096	35 Sheep	05/01 - 10/31	100	42

The above lease is subject to the following special terms and conditions:

1) The lease is contingent upon Mr. Nottingham holding a valid base property lease from the State Land Board.

The lease is also subject to the standard and common terms and conditions (see Attachment 2).

No Action Alternative
No adjustment in grazing dates or livestock numbers would be made. The transfer would be completed under the terms and conditions of the current lease.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/MITIGATION MEASURES

CRITICAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: Air quality will not be affected by either of the alternatives.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 12/16/05

ACEC

Affected Environment: Not present.

Environmental Consequences: Not applicable

Mitigative Measures: Not applicable

Name of specialist and date: Jim McBrayer 5/18/06

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The final E.I.S. for Rangeland Reform '94 notice published in the **Federal Register,** December 30, 1994 and guidance from the BLM Washington and BLM Colorado State Office's established requirements for permit renewal analyses.

Data developed here, as well as in the allotment specific analysis, was taken from the cultural program project report files, site report files, and base maps kept at the Little Snake Field Office as well as from An Overview of Prehistoric Cultural Resources Little Snake Resource Area, Northwestern Colorado, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resources Series, Number 20, and An Isolated Empire, A History of Northwestern Colorado, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resource Series, Number 2 and Appendix 21 of the Little Snake Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, Draft February 1986, Bureau of Land Management, Craig, Colorado District, Little Snake Resource Area. Other data sets may be used for the GIS maps developed from the Little Snake Field Office Geographic Information System (GIS) as that data is developed in future studies.

The GIS maps will be developed using USGS and BLM data that show the springs, creeks and rivers, intermittent drainage, riparian areas, and slopes greater than 30 percent. The BLM data that reflects water features potentially present in the project areas is incomplete at this time. This data represents the "best available data" that the BLM office currently has developed at this time. These maps, as well as the cultural programs current understanding of prehistoric settlement and subsistence patterns, as reflected in the archaeological record, will be used to guide initial survey efforts to locate past human activity areas in each allotment. These areas will be evaluated for

potential livestock concentration impacts. The effort to identify and evaluate cultural resources in association with livestock concentration areas will take place during upcoming field seasons.

The table below is based on the allotment specific analysis developed for the Dry Fork Allotment #04096. Copies of the allotment specific analysis are on file at the Little Snake Field Office. The table shows cultural resources, eligible and need data, and those that are anticipated to be in each allotment. Fieldwork will be carried out in FY06 or in subsequent years.

Allotment Number	**Acres Surveyed at a Class III Level [1] [2]**	**Acres NOT Surveyed at a Class III Level**	**Percent -%- Of Allotment Inventoried at a Class III Level**	**Eligible or Need Data Sites – Known in Allotment (Site Numbers)**	**Estimated Sites for the Allotment** ** **(Total Number)**	**Estimated Eligible or Need Data Sites in the Allotment (Number)**
04096	42[2]	157	21.10%	None	5.28	1.58

(Note: *****Acres are derived from GIS allotment maps. 1. BLM only acres or 2. BLM and other acres in the allotment. See allotment specific analysis form. **Estimates of site densities are based on known inventory data. Estimates represent a minimum figure which may be revised upwards based on future inventory findings.)

Environmental Consequences: Monitoring of the previous years range permit renewal environmental documents, FY98, FY99, FY2000, FY01, FY02, and FY03 has been carried out for some of the known eligible and need data sites identified in the cultural records review. These reports represent three field seasons of evaluation work on the eligible and need data sites. The fieldwork conducted during 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 identified impacts to some of the cultural resources being evaluated. This information is covered in the following reports:

Keesling, Henry S. and Gary D. Collins, Patrick C. Walker
2000 Cultural Resource Evaluation of Known Eligible and Need Data Sites within Range Allotments for Range Permit Renewal EA's FY98 and FY99. Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado. Copy on file at that office.

Collins, Gary D., and Patrick C. Walker, Sam R. Johnson, Henry S. Keesling
2001 **Addendum to** Cultural Resource Evaluation of Known Eligible and Need Data Sites within Range Allotments for Range Permit Renewal EAs FY98 and FY99, **Range Permit Renewal EA's FY2000 and FY2001.** Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado. Copy on file at that office.

Collins, Gary D. and Ryan J. Nordstrom, Henry S. Keesling
2002 **The Second Addendum** to The Cultural and Need Data Sites Within Range Allotments for Range Permit Renewal EA's FY98, FY99, FY00. FY01, and FY02. Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado. Copy on file at that office.

Collins, Gary D. and Henry S. Keesling
2003 **The Third Addendum** to The Cultural and Need Data Sites Within Range Allotments for Range Permit Renewals EA's FY98, FY99. Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado. Copy on file at that office.

Collins, Gary D. and Henry S. Keesling
2005 T**he Fourth Addendum** Range Permit Renewal FY04 and FY05 to The Cultural Resource Evaluation of Known Eligible and need Data Sites Within Range Allotments for Range Permit Renewal RA'2 FY00, FY01, FY02, FY03. BLM 10.27.05. Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado. Copy of file at that office.

BLM has committed to a ten year phased evaluation being conducted for cultural resources that takes into account identified livestock concentration areas and the cultural resources that are either eligible and/or need data and to carrying out mitigation on cultural resources that require this action. The phased monitor and mitigation approach will mitigate identified adverse effects, significant impacts and data loss, (NHPA Section 106, 36CFR800.9; Archaeological Resource Protection Act 1979; BLM/Colorado SHPO Protocol 1998; NEPA/FLPMA requirements) to an acceptable level for known eligible and need data cultural resources.

The GIS mapping and evaluation effort will establish areas that have potential conflicts between livestock and prehistoric cultural resources. The GIS maps will provide a computer generated visual departure point for the proposed cultural fieldwork. GIS maps using USGS and BLM best available data, will be created showing springs, stream course features, riparian areas, and slopes that are greater than 30% slope within the allotment. Current understanding of prehistoric settlement and subsistence patterns will be applied to the GIS map review and used to establish prehistoric cultural areas. These potential livestock concentration areas will be evaluated in the field.

Livestock impacts may cause cumulative effects, some of which will be significant, and will cause long-term, irreversible, potentially irretrievable adverse impacts and data loss. However, the phased identification and evaluation fieldwork will identify mitigation measures that will reduce these impacts (NHPA Section 106; 36CFR800.9; Archaeological Resource Protection Act 1979; BLM/Colorado SHPO Protocol 1998; NEPA/FLPMA requirements), to an acceptable level.

Other project specific Class III surveys initiated by the BLM, industry, or ranching will identify previously unrecorded cultural resources within these allotments. These cultural resources will be incorporated into current and/or future range permit renewal Section 106 review efforts.

Mitigative Measures: Standard Stipulations for cultural resources are included in Standard Terms and Conditions for the grazing lease (Attachment 2).

Allotment Specific Stipulations for this EA:

1. GIS maps based upon stream course features and springs from the 7.5 minute USGS maps and BLM best available riparian/spring data in this office will be used to initially establish

evaluation areas for livestock concentrations. Current archaeological understanding of settlement and subsistence patterns for prehistoric cultural resources will be applied to these maps. Identified livestock concentration areas will be field evaluated. Those areas with no livestock impacts but with potential for cultural resources will under go the same Class III survey discussed below. This survey will be conducted documenting archaeological resources which may be impacted if grazing practices change in the future. Identified concentration areas that exhibit livestock impacts will have the following cultural surveys:

Springs, riparian areas, streams or creeks, and intermittent drainage will have a Class III survey in the area of concentration that includes an additional 50 feet around the impacted area. Identified cultural resources will be recorded to include the total site area and mitigation developed.

Springs will have a Class III survey in the area of concentration and include an additional 50 feet around the impacted area. Identified cultural resources will be recorded to include the total site area and mitigation developed.

2. GIS maps showing slope potential, 30% or greater, where rock art and rock shelters are predicted to occur, will be used to initially establish evaluation areas for Class III survey. These areas will be evaluated for livestock concentrations. Identified concentration areas will have the following cultural surveys performed:

Potential rock shelters, rock art areas will be evaluated to see if cultural materials are present. When cultural resources are identified the site will be recorded and appropriate mitigation will be developed.

3. Previously identified sites, table above, and new sites recorded and evaluated as eligible and/or need data during other project specific Class III survey will need to be evaluated and monitored too. Initial recording of new sites and re-evaluation of the known sites will establish current condition of the resource and help in developing a monitoring plan for all sites. Some sites will have to be monitored more often than others. Sites that are impacted by grazing activities will need further monitoring, physical protection or other mitigative measures developed.

4. Site monitoring plans, other mitigation plans, will be developed and provided to the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer in accordance with the Protocol (1998) and subsequent programmatic agreements regarding grazing lease renewals.

Conducting Class III survey(s), monitoring, and developing site specific mitigation measures will mitigate the adverse effects, data loss, and significant impacts (NHPA Section 106, 36CFR800.9; Archaeological Resource Protection Act 1979; BLM Colorado and Colorado SHPO Protocol 1998; and NEPA/FLPMA requirements) to an acceptable level.

The Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) agreed with the Bureau of Land Management, Colorado, (BLM) that the BLM could issue its Range Renewal Permits with the proposed Cultural Resource Management actions, monitoring known eligible and need data sites

and conducting Class III and/or modified Class III surveys on selected areas of BLM lands within in a ten year time frame (Cultural Matrix Team Meeting 26 January 1999, Colorado BLM State Office).

The Little Snake Field Office will initiate the monitoring of known eligible and need data sites the first field season following the issuing of the lease if possible. This survey will be based upon an accepted, BLM and SHPO, research design that will establish criteria for evaluation of the sites for livestock impacts and any needed mitigation and future monitoring needs.

Name of Specialist and date: Henry S. Keesling 12/12/2005

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Affected Environment: The project would not directly affect the social, cultural, or economic well being and health of Native American, minority or low-income populations. The project area is relatively isolated from population centers, so no populations would be affected by physical or socioeconomic impacts from the project.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of Specialist and Date: Louise McMinn 12/15/2005

FLOOD PLAINS

Affected Environment: Dry Fork tributary streams that occur on the public land tracts have too high of a gradient to have an associated floodplain.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 12/16/05

INVASIVE, NONNATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Cheatgrass and whitetop are known to occur on this allotment. Houndstongue, black henbane, Canada thistle, and other biennial thistles are known to occur in this area as well. There is the potential for noxious weeds, such as Dalmatian toadflax, knapweeds, and others, to exist and spread in these areas.

Environmental Consequences: Vehicular access to public land for grazing operations, livestock and wildlife movement, as well as wind and water can cause invasive species to spread into new areas. Surface disturbance activities associated with livestock concentration can increase weed presence. Land practices and land uses by the livestock operator and their weed

control efforts will largely determine the identification and potential occurrence of weeds within the allotment. The conversion of cattle to sheep should facilitate better distribution creating less disturbance overall. The use of best management practices and mitigation of livestock disturbance can facilitate control of invasive species and reduce the potential of long term infestation of annual and noxious weed species. All principles of Integrated Pest Management would be employed to control noxious weeds on public lands.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Curtis Bryan 1/17/06

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The Dry Fork Allotment provides nesting habitat for Brewer's sparrow and sage sparrow. The allotment may be used by golden eagle for hunting activities although there are no known golden eagle nests near the project area.

Environmental Consequences: Use of this allotment by sheep could have an impact on nesting Brewer's sparrow and sage sparrow if it were to occur during the nesting period and could result in take by nest destruction. Historic use of this allotment has occurred in the early fall between September and early October. This use would not have a negative impact on either species. Livestock grazing should not have any impact on golden eagles ability to use the area for hunting activities. There is no chance of take of golden eagles

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 1/18/06

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

A letter was sent to the Uinta and Ouray Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Ute Mountain Utes Tribal Council, and the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs on 17 November 2004. The letter discussed the range permits that the BLM would be working on in FY05/FY06. Comments received from the Tribal Council's did not foresee any impacts. No other comments were received (Letters on file at the Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado.)

Name of Specialist and date: Henry S. Keesling 12/12/05

PRIME & UNIQUE FARMLANDS

Affected Environment: Not present

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 12/16/05

T&E SPECIES - SENSITIVE PLANTS

Affected Environment: There are no BLM sensitive plant species within the Dry Fork Allotment #04096.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 12/14/05

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED ANIMAL SPECIES

Affected Environment: There are no threatened or endangered species or habitat for such species in or near this grazing allotment. The Dry Fork Allotment does provide suitable nesting habitat for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and greater sage grouse, both are BLM special status species. The nearest greater sage grouse lek is located within ¾ of a mile from the allotment. There are two Columbian sharp-tailed grouse leks located within the Dry Fork Allotment. A third sharp-tailed grouse lek is located within ¾ of a mile of this lek. Much of the private lands surrounding this allotment have been converted into agricultural fields and are no longer capable of providing nesting habitat for either sage grouse or sharp-tailed grouse. This makes intact rangelands much more valuable to both species. A site visit was conducted by a BLM staff biologist on 8/12/05. It was determined that habitat areas were large enough to support viable populations for both species and that habitat conditions were good.

Environmental Consequences: The proposed lease renewal with a change of use from cattle to sheep would not have a negative impact on nesting habitat for either greater sage grouse or Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. The turnout date for sheep will be May 1 which would allow for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse to complete their breeding process before sheep are allowed to enter the allotment. This would ensure that breeding displays are not interrupted by livestock. Herding of sheep would help ensure that grazing animals are not allowed to over-utilize forage species on the allotment and result in negative impacts to nesting habitat. There is potential for nest trampling to occur if sheep use the allotment between May 1 and June 30. Historic actual use of the allotment has occurred during September and early October. Use of the allotment during these dates would not have any impact on greater sage grouse or Columbian sharp-tailed grouse.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 1/19/06

T&E SPECIES – PLANTS

Affected Environment: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered plant species within the Dry Fork Allotment #04096.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 12/14/05

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: If the release does occur, the environment affected would be dependent on the nature and volume of material released. If there are no releases, there will be no environmental impact.

Environmental Consequences: Consequences will be dependent on the volume and nature of the material released. In most every situation involving hazardous materials, there are ways to remediate the area that has been contaminated. Short-term consequences will occur, but they can be remedied, and long-term impacts will be minimal.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: D. Johnson 12/19/05

WATER QUALITY - GROUND

Affected Environment: The BLM area affected by the proposed action will have little chance of any ground water aquifers and what water does exist will most likely be of poor quality.

Environmental Consequences: Due to the limited number of livestock grazing, there will be no adverse impacts to ground water quality within the proposed action area. The proposed action will be conducted in accordance with existing Colorado laws for water quality. Specifically, all permit activities must comply with the applicable water quality regulations in The Colorado Water Quality Control Act, and they will be in conformance with the classifications and numeric standards for water quality established by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Fred Conrath 01/17/06

WATER QUALITY - SURFACE

Affected Environment: Runoff water drainage in the Dry Fork Allotment flows to the Dry Fork of Elkhead Creek, which is a tributary to Elkhead Creek. Elkhead Creek and all of its tributaries need to have water quality that can support Aquatic Life Cold 1, Recreation 1a, Water Supply and Agriculture.

Environmental Consequences: Proper grazing use of the allotment would not impair water quality under either of the alternatives.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 12/21/05

WETLANDS/RIPARIAN ZONES

Affected Environment: A total of nearly one acre of herbaceous wetland vegetation occurs within a couple of ephemeral drainages within the isolated 40-acre tract of public lands. These systems were evaluated by private consultants for the proposed Emerald Mountain Land Exchange. Each of these areas was functioning properly. No other riparian systems are known to occur on public lands within this allotment.

Environmental Consequences: Under the Proposed Action, riparian systems are expected to continue to function properly with authorized sheep use. Under the No Action Alternative, cattle use would continue to be authorized within the allotment from May 1 to October 31. Since cattle use has not occurred for several years it is not known how cattle typically distributed within the allotment. The riparian areas found on the 40-acre tract of public lands may receive more use throughout the summer and may not remain in proper functioning condition.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 12/28/05

WILD & SCENIC RIVERS

Affected Environment: Not present

Environmental Consequences: Not applicable

Mitigative Measures: Not applicable

Name of specialist and date: Jim McBrayer 5/18/06

WILDERNESS and WSAs

Affected Environment: Not present

Environmental Consequences: Not applicable

Mitigative Measures: Not applicable

Name of specialist and date: Jim McBrayer 5/18/06

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

SOILS

Affected Environment: Soils found on the public land tracts were derived from shale and are primarily silty clay loams; some minor amounts of loam and silty clays are also present. The soils are primarily very deep and well drained because of their upland position. The fine textured soils have very slow to slow permeability, very high runoff and a very high water erosion hazard. These soils are correlated to the Claypan and Deep Loam Range Sites.

Biological soil crusts found within grazing allotments generally have reduced occurrence and diversity. Except for cyanobacteria that is usually present in the inter-spaces, most soil crusts are found below the edge of the brush canopy, where trampling effects are lessened and sunlight is available.

Climatic factors such as drought, type of rainfall, presence and depth of snowpack, freeze-thaw process and a frost-layer will affect the moisture regime of the soil profile seasonally.

Environmental Consequences: Environmental consequences that are common to all alternatives include an inherently very high to high runoff and very high water erosion hazards. Overuse of the vegetative resource can increase these rates and topsoil losses could result. Although the Proposed Action does not include a specific rotational grazing practice, a loose rotation will likely result with sheep herding. Herding sheep will control the timing and duration of the grazing treatment and reduce the potential for over utilization of the vegetation. Under the No Action Alternative, cattle use for the specified period (5/1 to 10/31) without a rotation schedule could increase areas of concentrated use within the allotment, resulting in over utilization of the vegetative resource. These areas would primarily be on private surface and on slight to moderate slopes near water sources. The larger 160-acre tract of public lands would likely not have large areas of concentrated use. The 40-acre tract has lesser slopes and has associated riparian areas and could receive some concentrated use by cattle.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 12/28/05

VEGETATION

Affected Environment: The vegetation in the allotment has an overstory of Wyoming big sagebrush, snowberry, and serviceberry. Grass species observed were prairie Junegrass and western wheatgrass. Other species in the area were low sage, arrowleaf balsamroot, wild onion, mule's ear, yarrow, lupine, cinquefoil, purple aster, and shrubby buckwheat.

Environmental Consequences: The change in livestock class from cattle to sheep would have little effect on the vegetation. Though the change to sheep may encourage a slight increase in utilization of browse and forb species, this would not be a significant change in overall forage utilization across the allotment. Given the healthy and productive plant community on the allotment this would continue to remain a diverse and vigorous community. It would also be expected that the sheep would utilize portions of the allotment not frequently grazed by cattle, improving distribution.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Martin M. Espil 1/4/06

AQUATIC WILDLIFE

Affected Environment: There is no aquatic wildlife habitat within the Dry Fork Allotment.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 1/18/06

TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE

Affected Environment: The Dry Fork Allotment provides productive wildlife habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Mule deer and elk can use the allotment throughout the year. This allotment also provides severe winter range for elk. A portion of the public lands within this allotment are mapped as overall range for black bear. Overall range indicates an area which encompasses all known seasonal activity areas within the observed range of a population of bears. In addition to these species, the Dry Fork Allotment also provides suitable habitat for several species of small mammals and reptiles.

Environmental Consequences: The proposed lease renewal with a change of use from cattle to sheep will not impact terrestrial wildlife habitat. Although the existing lease lists cattle as the permitted livestock use, the operator has actually grazed sheep on the allotment. The proposed

stocking rates will not have a negative impact on habitat for species known to use this allotment. Herding of sheep will help ensure that grazing animals do not overuse a piece of land resulting in habitat degradation.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 1/18/05

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, those brought forward for analysis will be formatted as shown above.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Access		PB1/12/06	
Fluid Minerals		FC1/17/06	
Forest Management	MME1/4/06		
Hydrology/Ground		FC1/17/06	
Hydrology/Surface		OO 12/16/05	
Paleontology		RE 12/14/05	
Range Management	MME 1/4/06		
Realty Authorizations		LM 12/15/05	
Recreation/Travel Mgmt		RS 01/03/06	
Socio-Economics		LM 12/15/05	
Solid Minerals		RE 12/14/05	
Visual Resources		JM 12/16/05	
Wild Horse & Burro Mgmt	VMD 12/27/05		

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY:

STANDARDS

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (animal) STANDARD: The Dry Fork Allotment provides healthy productive wildlife habitat for a variety of big game, small mammal and reptile species. The proposed use of this allotment by sheep will not have a negative impact on any of these species populations. Herding of sheep may displace some wildlife species from the area in use but would not prevent wildlife from using the allotment. This standard is currently being met and will continue to be met under the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 1/18/05

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (animal) STANDARD: There are no threatened or endangered species or habitat for such species in or near the Dry Fork Allotment. This allotment does contain breeding habitat for Columbian sharp-

tailed grouse. Greater sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse are likely to use the allotment for nesting activities. Current habitat conditions on public lands within this allotment are good and are capable of supporting both species. The proposed changes to this grazing lease could impact nesting birds if grazing occurs between May 1 and June 30. Historic use of this allotment has occurred during early fall and would not have an impact on either species. No negative impacts to either species habitat is likely to occur from the authorization of this grazing lease. This standard is currently being met and will continue to be met in the future.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 1/18/05

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (plant) STANDARD: The plant standard for the Proposed Action area was found to be meeting standards during the assessment on 8/12/2005. Species diversity was high, and plant density and production was found to be medium to high. This standard would continue to be met under the Proposed Action, as well as the No Action Alternatives.

Name of specialist and date: Martin M. Espil 1/17/2006

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (plant) STANDARD: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species within the Dry Fork Allotment #04096. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 12/14/05

RIPARIAN SYSTEMS STANDARD: The riparian standard for healthy rangelands will be met with implementation of the Proposed Action. Herding sheep within the Dry Fork Allotment will control the use that occurs in and near the riparian resources.

Implementation of the No Action Alternative could increase use in and around riparian areas that are presently considered to be functioning properly. The resulting condition of these riparian resources will depend on how cattle distribute within the allotment for the 6-month grazing period. If repeated concentrated use of riparian areas by cattle occurs, the riparian systems could become significantly degraded. This standard would then no longer be met under the No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 12/28/05

WATER QUALITY STANDARD: The water quality standard for healthy rangelands will be met with implementation of either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternatives. Runoff from snowmelt and summer storms will drain from the Dry Fork Allotment into stream segments that

are presently supporting classified uses. No stream segments are listed as impaired.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 12/21/05

UPLAND SOILS STANDARD: The upland soil standard for healthy rangelands will be met with implementation of either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternatives. Proper grazing use of the forage resource is required under the terms and conditions of the lease; this level of grazing would maintain sufficient residual forage for upland soil health to be maintained.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 12/28/05

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED: Uinta and Ouray Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Ute Mountain Utes Tribal Council, and the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, Colorado State Land Board, Mike Nottingham.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

BLM: Standard Stipulations for cultural resources are included in Standard Terms and Conditions for the grazing lease (Attachment 2).

Allotment Specific Stipulations for this EA:

1. GIS maps based upon stream course features and springs from the 7.5 minute USGS maps and BLM best available riparian/spring data in this office will be used to initially establish evaluation areas for livestock concentrations. Current archaeological understanding of settlement and subsistence patterns for prehistoric cultural resources will be applied to these maps. Identified livestock concentration areas will be field evaluated. Those areas with no livestock impacts but with potential for cultural resources will under go the same Class III survey discussed below. This survey will be conducted documenting archaeological resources which may be impacted if grazing practices change in the future. Identified concentration areas that exhibit livestock impacts will have the following cultural surveys:

Springs, riparian areas, streams or creeks, and intermittent drainage will have a Class III survey in the area of concentration that includes an additional 50 feet around the impacted area. Identified cultural resources will be recorded to include the total site area and mitigation developed.

Springs will have a Class III survey in the area of concentration and include an additional 50 feet around the impacted area. Identified cultural resources will be recorded to include the total site area and mitigation developed.

2. GIS maps showing slope potential, 30% or greater, where rock art and rock shelters are predicted to occur, will be used to initially establish evaluation areas for Class III survey. These areas will be evaluated for livestock concentrations. Identified concentration areas will have the following cultural surveys performed:

Potential rock shelters, rock art areas will be evaluated to see if cultural materials are present.

When cultural resources are identified the site will be recorded and appropriate mitigation will be developed.

3. Previously identified sites, table above, and new sites recorded and evaluated as eligible and/or need data during other project specific Class III survey will need to be evaluated and monitored too. Initial recording of new sites and re-evaluation of the known sites will establish current condition of the resource and help in developing a monitoring plan for all sites. Some sites will have to be monitored more often than others. Sites that are impacted by grazing activities will need further monitoring, physical protection or other mitigative measures developed.

4. Site monitoring plans, other mitigation plans, will be developed and provided to the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer in accordance with the Protocol (1998) and subsequent programmatic agreements regarding grazing lease renewals.

Conducting Class III survey(s), monitoring, and developing site specific mitigation measures will mitigate the adverse effects, data loss, and significant impacts (NHPA Section 106, 36CFR800.9; Archaeological Resource Protection Act 1979; BLM Colorado and Colorado SHPO Protocol 1998; and NEPA/FLPMA requirements) to an acceptable level.

The Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) agreed with the Bureau of Land Management, Colorado, (BLM) that the BLM could issue its Range Renewal Permits with the proposed Cultural Resource Management actions, monitoring known eligible and need data sites and conducting Class III and/or modified Class III surveys on selected areas of BLM lands within in a ten year time frame (Cultural Matrix Team Meeting 26 January 1999, Colorado BLM State Office).

The Little Snake Field Office will initiate the monitoring of known eligible and need data sites the first field season following the issuing of the lease if possible. This survey will be based upon an accepted, BLM and SHPO, research design that will establish criteria for evaluation of the sites for livestock impacts and any needed mitigation and future monitoring needs.

SIGNATURE OF PREPARER:

DATE SIGNED:

SIGNATURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWER:

DATE SIGNED:

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Allotment Map
Attachment 2 – Standard and Common Terms and Conditions

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The environmental assessment (EA# CO-100-2006-017) analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action, has been reviewed. With the implementation of the attached mitigation measures there is a finding of no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

1. Beneficial, adverse, direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts have been disclosed in the EA. Analysis indicated no significant impacts on society as a whole, the affected region, the affected interests or the locality. The physical and biological effects are limited to the Little Snake Resource Area and adjacent land.

2. Public health and safety would not be adversely impacted. There are no known or anticipated concerns with project waste or hazardous materials.

3. There would be no adverse impacts to regional or local air quality, prime or unique farmlands, known paleontological resources on public land within the area, wetlands, floodplain, areas with unique characteristics, ecologically critical areas or designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

4. There are no highly controversial effects on the environment.

5. There are no effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk. Sufficient information on risk is available based on information in the EA and other past actions of a similar nature.

6. This alternative does not set a precedent for other actions that may be implemented in the future to meet the goals and objectives of adopted Federal, State or local natural resource related plans, policies or programs.

7. No cumulative impacts related to other actions that would have a significant adverse impact were identified or are anticipated.

8. Based on previous and ongoing cultural surveys, and through mitigation by avoidance, no adverse impacts to cultural resources were identified or anticipated. There are no known American Indian religious concerns or persons or groups who might be disproportionately and adversely affected as anticipated by the Environmental Justice Policy.

9. No adverse impacts to any threatened or endangered species or their habitat that was determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act were identified. If, at a future time, there could be the potential for adverse impacts, treatments would be modified or mitigated not to have an adverse effect or new analysis would be conducted.

10. This alternative is in compliance with relevant Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and requirements for the protection of the environment.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

DATE SIGNED: 05/11/06